

The paragraphs listed below will replace all prior versions and listings of these paragraphs in the application:

[0026] As best shown in Fig. 2, in order to allow the caster 72 to be rotatable about two axes of rotation, the caster 72 can include a swivel 84 rotatably connectable to the telescoping leg 64, an axle 88 engaging the swivel 84, and a caster wheel 92 rotatably connected to the axle 88 such that the caster wheel 92 is capable of revolving about the axle 88. The caster 72 can also be provided with a locking assembly 96 adapted to engage the caster wheel 92 so as to substantially impede the revolution of the caster wheel 92 about the axle 88 when the locking mechanism 96 is in a locked position. Further, the locking assembly 96 and the caster 72 may also include a first resistance disk 100 attached to the axle 88 of the caster wheel 92 and a second resistance disk 101 attached to the swivel 84 and a stopping material 103 disposed between the first, second resistance disks 100, 101, respectively. The stopping material 103 may be for example a typical brake pad material or felt. Whereby the second disk 101 cooperates with the locking assembly 96 to further impede the revolution of the caster wheel 92 on the axle 88 when the locking assembly 96 is in the locked position by adding additional friction against the first resistance disk 100 when the locking assembly 96 is in the locked position. Each of the plurality of resistance disks 100 can be for example a washer made of any material having a coefficient of friction sufficient to engage and hold the caster wheel 92 in a substantially immovable position wherein each resistance disk 100 is disposed on the axle 88 adjacent to the caster wheel 92.

[0028] In one preferred embodiment, the mast 24 is L- shaped and has a foot portion 108 and an elongated member 112. The foot portion 108 connects to the base frame 20 and the elongated member 112 connects to the foot portion 108. In one preferred embodiment, the elongated member 112 is removably connected to the foot portion 108, for example via a removable pin 118, so that the elongated member 112 can be removed from the foot portion 108, for example for storage or shipment of the portable apparatus 10. However, although the foot portion 108 is describe above as being connected to the elongated member 112 via the removable pin 118, it should be understood that the foot portion 108 and the elongated member 112 can be connected by any means, such as for example welding, bonding, bolting, screwing, gluing, clamping, fastening, magnetizing or any other means known in the art. Further, the connection can also be permanent or adjustable.

[0029] In one preferred embodiment, the elongated member 112 includes at least one piece of box channel tubing 114 so as to provide the elongated member 112 of the mast 24 with a forward surface 116, a rearward surface 120, a first side surface 124, and a second side surface 130. The rearward surface 120 is oppositely disposed of the forward surface 116. The first side surface extends generally from the forward surface 116 to the rearward surface 120, and the second side surface 130 is oppositely disposed of the first side surface and extends generally from the forward surface 116 to the rearward surface 120. Further, the mast 24 can have a plurality of holes 132 therethrough, which may or may not be threaded, which can be used to facilitate connections made with the mast 24, for example by allowing pins, bolts, or screws to be disposed through the holes 132. For example, the holes

132 can be keyhole slots in at least one of the forward surface 116, rearward surface 120, first side surface 124, second side surface 130, or combinations thereof, of the elongated member 112 of the mast 24.

[0034] In one embodiment, the hoist assembly 150 is connected to the elongated member 112 of the mast 24 of the portable apparatus 10, preferably in a removable or adjustable manner. For example, when the mast 24 includes at least one piece of box channel tubing 114 with holes 132 therethrough, the hoist assembly 150 can be removably mounted onto the mast 24 with at least one mounting bolt 164. In one preferred embodiment, the hoist assembly 150 is connected generally near the first end 36 of the mast 24 so that the hoist assembly 150 does not interfere with the lifting frame 146 and/or water heater 18 as the lifting frame 146 and/or water heater 18 traverses generally along at least a portion of the length 44 of the mast 24. In another embodiment, when the water heater 18 is to be lifted along a substantial portion of the length 44 of the mast 24, the portable apparatus 10 can further be provided with a hoist post 158, as shown in Fig. 3. In one preferred embodiment, the hoist post 158, disposed generally adjacent to the mast 24 so that the hoist assembly 150 can be connected, preferably removable or adjustably, to the hoist post 158 whereby the hoist assembly 150 traverses the lifting frame 136 along at least a portion of the length 44 of the mast 24. For example, when the hoist assembly 150 includes the hand crank winch 156 which retracts or advances the flexible belt 154, the hoist assembly 150 can further include a spindle 160 or wheel (not shown) connected near the first end 36 of the mast 24 along which the flexible belt 154 traverses so as to provide a pulley system for the hoist assembly 150. Further, the hoist assembly 150 can be disposed

independent of the mast 24 or the hoist post 158. For example, the hoist assembly 150 can be disposed on the surface 48, or another surface, such as for example a wall or a piece of equipment (not shown).

[0035] In one preferred embodiment, the lifting frame 146 has an upper arm 162 and a lower arm 166 cooperating to support at least a portion of the water heater 18 and a brace member 170 connecting the upper arm 162 and lower arm 166 in a generally vertically spaced relation. So that the lifting frame 146 is traversable along at least a portion of the length 44 of the mast 24, the brace member 170 can be provided with a plurality of guide bearings 174 (only one such guide bearing 174 being numbered for purposes of clarity) rotatably engaging the mast 24. In one preferred embodiment, the brace member 170 comprises two pair of guide bearings 174, with each such pair of guide bearings 174 journaling about a stub axle 178 (only one stub axle 178 being numbered for purposes of clarity) connected to the brace member 170. In one embodiment, the brace member 170 straddles the first side surface 124 and second side surface 130 of the elongated member 112 of the mast 24 and is in a slidable relation with respect to the forward surface 116 and rearward surface 120 of the elongated member 112 of the mast 24.